

973.6B Speech Reviewing the  
P75h Principles of James K.  
Polk & the Leaders of  
Modern Democracy

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P75h







SPEECH

1844

OF

MR. J. J. HARDIN, OF ILLINOIS,

REVIEWING THE PRINCIPLES OF

JAMES K. POLK & THE LEADERS OF MODERN DEMOCRACY.

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DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES, JUNE 3, 1844.

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## SPEECH.

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The Civil and Diplomatic Bill being under consideration in Committee of the Whole, in the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States, June 3, 1844--

Mr. PAYNE, of Alabama, made a speech approving the nominees of the Baltimore Convention, against the Whig party, and in favor of the annexation of Texas.

Mr. HARDIN, having obtained the floor, immediately succeeded him, and spoke as follows :

Mr. CHAIRMAN : When I entered the House this morning, it was far from my expectation that a discussion would arise involving the merits of the newly selected candidate for the Presidency. But, as this political discussion has been begun by the gentleman from Georgia, (Mr. BLACK,) and has been continued with so much warmth and zeal by the gentleman from Alabama, (Mr. PAYNE,) who now applauds and fully endorses Mr. POLK as a genuine Democrat of the latest school, I shall enter without further ceremony into this discussion; and I promise gentlemen I will give their *polk-stalk* a good shaking before I am done with it.

[A voice here called out for order, as it was impossible to hear.]

Mr. HARDIN. Never mind, I will make them hear, and listen too, before I am done with them. I intend to examine the political history of this new candidate for the Presidency, and I believe that when the American people come to understand his principles and history, they will believe that, although Mr. VAN BUREN has met with political death at the hands of his friends, to make way for Mr. POLK, he was still a giant by the side of a pigmy, when compared with the man they have placed in his shoes.

### THE TARIFF.

What are the arguments which the gentleman has advanced in favor of Mr. POLK ? He alludes to the tariff first, and says Mr. POLK has never been guilty of equivocation, but has always been consistent on this subject. Is there not here an acknowledgment of a fact we had often charged, that Mr. VAN BUREN had equivocated and shuffled on the tariff?

Mr. PAYNE protested against any inference of this kind ; he had said nothing disrespectful of Mr. VAN BUREN.

Mr. HARDIN resumed. Certainly we could not expect you to kill Mr. VAN BUREN first, and then kick him afterwards. In the recent convention it was apparent that Mr. VAN BUREN had been ruled off, and consigned to political disgrace, for the purpose of trying a new man, with whom the party would be able to ride into power, and again get possession of the spoils of office. For, whilst to the great mass of the Democratic party I am always willing to accord perfect honesty in the profession of their principles, and a desire to advance the best interests of our country, yet I must be permitted to say, that on many of the leading politicians of your party I am not willing to bestow this meed of praise.

The gentleman from Alabama endorses Mr. POLK in full, and especially lauds his views on the tariff. I am pleased to find Mr. POLK has such an endorser. But it is well enough for this House and the country to understand what are the views of the gentleman who thus applauds him. Does not every member here know that the member from Alabama, (Mr. PAYNE,) is the most bitter enemy of the tariff system that there is in this House ? and do we not remember that he has denounced the Whig tariff of 1842 as a "*system of legalized plunder*?" Glad am I to see that when Colonel POLK finds eulogists on this floor, they come from that section of the House who entertain and avow the sentiment, that they hold to be unconstitutional, and are opposed to, any tariff system which may be adjusted to protect American labor. When the laboring people of this country come to understand who they are, and what are the sentiments of those, who thus endorse Colonel POLK's views, they will be apt to ponder long before they will give their support to any man who stands *thus endorsed*.

But, sir, we do not have to rest upon the gentleman from Alabama for Mr. POLK's views on the tariff, for I find them explained by himself, in a speech delivered last year in Tennessee, when Colonel POLK was canvassing for Governor of that State ; an office which the good people of that State, for a second time, declared he was not qualified to fill, although the late Baltimore Convention have suddenly and unexpectedly found qualifications in him suitable to make a locofoco candidate for the Presidency. I have before me the "*Synopsis of Governor Polk's speech to the people of Madison and the adjoining counties, delivered at Jackson, on Monday, the 3d of April, 1843,*" printed in pamphlet form, and written out for publication by Governor POLK. From it I quote the following extracts :

"He took other views, briefly presented, of the subject, and proceeded to the discussion of the protective tariff act passed by the last Congress. He showed that it was a highly protective tariff, and not one for



‘ revenue. He showed that, by the compromise tariff act of 1833, the tax on no imported article was to exceed 20 per cent. upon its value after the 30th of June, 1842. No higher tax than 20 per cent. *was* imposed on any article after the 30th of June, 1842, until the 30th of August, 1842, on which latter day the present tariff law was passed by the Whig Congress. The Whig Congress laid violent hands on the compromise act of 1833, and broke it up.”

“It was clear, therefore, that the late tariff act was not a revenue measure. It had raised the rates of duty so high as to shut out imports, and consequently to cut off and diminish revenue.”

“Judging from the amount of revenue received at the Treasury, under the operations of the present tariff act, for the last quarter of 1842, as already shown, it will not produce annually half the amount of revenue which would have been produced by the lower rates of the compromise act, had that act been left undisturbed.”

“[4.] He was opposed to direct taxes, and to prohibitory and protective duties, and in favor of such *moderate* duties as would not cut off importations. IN OTHER WORDS, HE WAS IN FAVOR OF REDUCING THE DUTIES TO THE RATES OF THE COMPROMISE ACT, WHERE THE WHIG CONGRESS FOUND THEM ON THE 30th OF JUNE, 1842.”

“The South, and he with them, had voted for the act of 1832 because it was a reduction of the rates of the act of 1828, though by no means so low as he would have desired it to be; still it was the greatest reduction which could be attained at the time of its passage.”

“THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE COURSE OF THE POLITICAL PARTY WITH WHICH HE, (Mr. MILTON BROWN,) ACTS AND MYSELF IS, WHILST THEY ARE THE ADVOCATES OF DISTRIBUTION AND A PROTECTIVE TARIFF—MEASURES WHICH I CONSIDER RUINOUS TO THE INTERESTS OF THE COUNTRY, AND ESPECIALLY TO THE INTERESTS OF THE PLANTING STATES—I HAVE STEADILY AND AT ALL TIMES OPPOSED BOTH.”

These extracts conclusively prove the hostility of Colonel POLK to the protective policy, which he considers “*ruinous to the country, especially to the planting States.*” That is a sufficient argument with him. He therefore is now for “*reducing the duties to the rates under the compromise act, where the Whig Congress found them on the 30th June, 1842;*” and Governor POLK himself shows that “*the tax on no imported article was to exceed twenty per cent. upon its value after the 30th of June, 1842.*” Then it is clearly seen that he is for a HORIZONTAL TARIFF of twenty per cent., with discriminations (if any are made) below even that rate.

I pass by, without comment, the far-seeing statesmanlike predictions of Governor POLK, that the tariff of 1842 “*had raised the rates of duty so high as to shut out imports, and consequently to cut off and diminish revenue.*” The subsequent increase of both imports and revenue under this tariff have given such a fulfilment to this prophecy as must forever immortalize Colonel POLK as a wonderful prophet.

But let us look further back for some of Mr. POLK’s views and votes on this subject. In the session of 1832 and 1833, the Committee of Ways and Means, of which Mr. POLK was a member, brought forward a bill (which did not pass) reducing the duties on nearly all the articles then taxed by the tariff, *except tea and coffee*. These articles were then exempt from duty, and this bill proposed to levy a duty on them of *twenty per cent.* Mr. POLK made a lengthy anti-tariff speech then in defence of the bill, which will be found in Congressional Debates, vol. 9, pages 1162 to 1175. In this speech Mr. POLK admits that, at that very time, the Government had “*six millions of revenue from imports more than we need.*” Yet, notwithstanding such was the fact, when the proposition was made to strike out tea and coffee from the bill, so as to keep them free of duty, Mr. POLK voted against it. (Journal of House of Representatives, 1832 and 1833, pages 390, 391.) The reason of this vote is easily given. Mr. POLK holds, in common with the Southern free-trade politicians, that a tariff should be levied *for revenue alone*. Of course, then, there is no reason why tea and coffee should be exempt from duty; and if, by laying a twenty per cent. duty on these articles, one or two millions of revenue could be realized, the duties on iron, woollens, and other protected articles, might be reduced in a corresponding ratio.

The extracts above, and most of the comments on them, I published recently in a letter to General Irwin, and the Globe of June 1, in commenting on them, quotes the extract marked [4,] and adds:

“This extract, we agree with Mr. HARDIN, contains a fair exposition of Colonel POLK’s views, at the same time it announces, in brief, the doctrine of *a tariff for revenue only*, which we regard as *the doctrine entertained universally, almost, by the Democratic party.*”

By the aid of the Globe, and the gentleman from Alabama, we are at no loss to comprehend Colonel POLK’s views respecting this subject. He is for “*a tariff for revenue only*,” without extending one particle of protection to American industry of any description. And if such a provision appears in any tariff bill as would give *protection* to any branch of our national industry, it is to be excoriated. Aye, sir, plucked out, and torn up forcibly by the roots, even if the unnatural operation should wring the heart-strings, and cover with desolation the happy homes, of a million of laboring American citizens.

The gentleman has tauntingly told us to come out with our principles, and not to have one set for the North and another for the South. If the gentleman will look into Whig papers, or the proceedings of Whig meetings throughout the Union, he will see there is no diversity of opinion amongst us on the leading political topics of the day. But, sir, with what grace does such a taunt come from that side of the House?



What are your principles at the North on the subject of the tariff? Sir, there shall be no blinking, or dodging, or skulking, round this question. I call upon those who claim to be Democratic members from Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, and Massachusetts, and I put the question to them directly. *Do you endorse the doctrines of Colonel Polk?* Don't hang back, but come up like men and show your hands. You have but one of three choices. Give up your principles and go with Polk against all protection:—or act the part of political hucksters, and put your principles in your pockets, and tell your constituents that you consider all principles, and the interest of the country, of secondary importance, when compared with those seven immortal paramount principles of locofocoism, *the five loaves and two fishes*:—or, finally, and what I expect will be the last alternative with your party leaders, but the first to be adopted by your constituents, act the fair and honorable part of honest and upright American citizens, by coming out boldly, and discarding the man who is thus openly the enemy of their dearest interests and most cherished principles. Sir, the attention of the people is attracted to this subject. In the emphatic language of the Indian tribes, "*their eyes are open, and their ears are not stopped.*" Throughout the length and breadth of our land, in the North and South, in the East and West, at every forge, in every workshop, and in every barn yard, the reviving and beneficial influences of the tariff of 1812 are felt; and, sir, my word for it, the people are not to be deterred from sustaining that system which will afford fair protection to domestic labor, by the senseless bravadoes and vapid declamations of free trade politicians. Nor will they permit their eyes to be blinded by *Texas sand*, or their senses lulled into fatal repose by the quack medicine which locofoco doctors are so anxious to prescribe, and which has recently been manufactured to order at the Baltimore laboratory, out of the "expressed juice" of the *berries of Polk*.

Although I am willing to concede that it is not the case with many individuals; yet, sir, taking your party as a whole in this House, and your leaders elsewhere, there is no honesty in them on this question. When we assembled here, you had more than two-thirds of this House, and yet you never could pass, although it was often attempted, an abstract resolution, declaring that you were for a tariff for revenue only, or that the present tariff ought to be repealed. Your Committee of Ways and Means brought in their famous British Tariff Bill, and you boasted loudly how triumphantly you would pass it through this House. But, sir, you kept it lingering along for political purposes to affect the Virginia elections, and when they went against you, on the motion of one of your professing democrats, it received its death by a *coup de grace*. From these facts, I am authorized in charging your party with political dishonesty in their professions on this subject. When do you ever expect to have a larger majority in this House? When do you expect to be more unanimous in the condemnation of the tariff, than you were in that of 1842? If every Whig would withdraw from this House, and there was a certainty the bill would pass the Senate, I do not believe your party would pass the tariff bill which was introduced here, without incorporating into it essential protective principles. The people have watched your equivocating, double dealing course; and they have become convinced that your principles cannot be carried into practice without detriment to the public service, and that your party leaders are not honest in their professions. And, sir, the universal voice of public sentiment, which comes to us from every quarter of our country, cannot be mistaken, which proclaims that the people are not prepared to trust the reins of Government to the hands of a set of politicians who are either dishonest in the profession of their opinions, or are destitute of the firmness and principle which are necessary to carry them into operation.

#### THE PET BANK SYSTEM.

I will not dwell longer on the tariff. That question is definitively settled, unless the people are unwise enough to again trust your party with power, and the leaders should be led to believe they could once more trample with impunity upon the interests and wishes of the people. I turn again to Mr. Polk. He was in Congress, from 1826 to 1838, twelve years. I will not ask his friends what great speech he ever delivered, or what prominent measure he ever brought forward, which left his name and the impress of his genius, for good, upon the institutions of our country. I repeat, sir, I will not inquire thus of his friends, for I know *their extreme modesty will forbid an answer*. And fearing, sir, lest his marvellous political services may never reach the light, unless it is made manifest by some one who, like myself, is not overburdened with a profound sense of the obligations of the country to Mr. Polk, "I will take the responsibility" of lifting the veil which conceals the effulgence of his legislative honors!

When the deposits were removed from the U. S. Bank, the first great experiment on the currency was determined on; and your party, throughout the country, according to intimations from headquarters, advocated and created numberless State Banks to supply the circulation which would be withdrawn by the winding up of that institution. To aid the Government in the transfer and collection of its revenue, the *Pet Bank Deposit System* was brought forward in Congress. And who, sir, had the honor of introducing it into the world? Why, sir, *JAMES K. POLK was the man!* and if he should not have the paternity of any thing else, he at least has left this much lauded bantling of his own, as a memento to posterity of his legislative prowess. I do not design you shall rest upon my word alone for the evidence of his support of that measure. Mr. Polk made two speeches in favor of the proposition in Congress; the first of which was delivered Feb. 10, 1835, and will be found recorded in vol. 11, pages 1266 to 1281, Congressional Debates, and the other delivered Feb. 19th, 1835, and will be found in same volume, page 1440. From these speeches I will read a few short extracts.



“Through the agency of State banks, the fiscal operations of Government have, during the past year, been eminently successful. The collection of the public revenue, and the transfer of funds to distant points for disbursement, have been made by the deposit banks—promptly, efficiently, and without charge to the public. Nothing has been lost to the Treasury, and no part of the public service has suffered in convenience by the employment of these agents.”

“Connected with this, the state of the general currency is found to be in as sound a state as at any former period.”

“During the period which elapsed between the 3d of March, 1811, and the beginning of 1817—during which no bank of the United States existed, and when State banks were exclusively employed as fiscal agents and public depositories—not a dollar was lost to the Treasury by the failure of banks.”

“I have thus briefly considered the two principal points of objection—the alleged unsafety of the State banks as public depositories, and their incompetency to perform the duties required of them as fiscal agents of the Government. As regards the first, it has been my object to show, from well attested facts, that they are as safe as any other description of agency could be. That occasional losses during their employment for a long period of time, may be possible, is not controverted; but should these occur, (as is not anticipated,) it should be remembered that such losses are incidental to all credit, and is not likely to be greater, nor, indeed, under the many guards contained in this bill for the public security, so great as that which might reasonably be expected from the employment of any other description of agents.”

“As regards the second objection—the alleged incompetency of these banks as fiscal agents—the manner in which they have performed, and are performing, these duties, must remove all doubts which may have existed on that point. It is no longer a question of doubt, whether they can, with facility and promptness, transfer the public funds to the most distant points for disbursement, and perform all other duties which, as fiscal agents, they may be required to perform.”

“The country, then, has been prosperous; but she is indebted for that prosperity neither to the bank nor to the panic, but to the new impulses springing out of the employment of State banks as fiscal agents of the Government, to which the bank and its friends had been the most inveterate enemies, and did all in their power to sweep them from the face of the earth.”

More fulsome praise than that which is contained in the above extracts, and others which might be made from these speeches, could not be bestowed upon the deposit banks. It is true, as is alleged by Col. POLK, that the friends of a National bank were the inveterate enemies of this pet bank system. The leading Whigs in Congress, with the forecast of statesmen, predicted the disastrous results which would follow the adoption of that system. But in spite of their warnings and protestations, the Democratic army in Congress, led on by the gallant POLK, achieved the mighty triumph of passing, over the heads of opposing Whigs, the pet bank deposit bill. This was Col. POLK's first, greatest, mightiest achievement! The glory of his career had culminated to its zenith!! That day was the Austerlitz of his fame!!! Borne upwards upon the wings of that glory which had become his inheritance from the adoption of this magnificent scheme, with the aid of an occasional lift upwards by the collar from the occupant of the White House, he soared far aloft above all competitors, and at last condescended to alight in the seat of the Speaker of the House of Representatives!

Alas! how transitory are the bubbles which oft-times float light substances into office! Col. POLK had scarcely been seated long enough in his chair to become accustomed to hear himself called Mr. Speaker, before his boasted pet bank system exploded, and left nothing to mark the existence of the experiment, but the record which shows the misfortunes of those who trusted, and the folly of those who created this bantling of your candidate.

### THE SUB-TREASURY.

Not tired yet of trying experiments, your party, with the “Great Rejected” in the lead, proposed the adoption of the Sub-treasury. This was then held forth as the sovereign remedy for all the diseases of the body politic. Col. POLK forthwith retracted all he said in favor of the deposit system, and became the advocate of the sub-treasury. Here is a somerset worth noting. It shows the stoic philosophy of the father who could sacrifice and disinherit his own well-loved offspring, to cherish the adopted child of the *late magician*. If the country is not prepared to approve of Mr. POLK's conduct in creating the miserable pet bank system, they will surely give him credit for the sacrifice he made in going for the sub-treasury. He not only threw a second somerset, but he eat his own words.

It is well known that Gen. GORDON, of Virginia, was the first person who proposed the sub-treasury scheme in Congress. This was in the session of 1834-'5, and the locofoco party then went *en masse* against it. And who was their leader in that charge against Gen. GORDON's sub-treasury. No other than the then chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, the warlike POLK! Not only did he vote against this proposition, but he made a speech against it, in which he contrasted it with his favorite deposit system, and held up this “untried experiment” as more unsafe and expensive than any other system. I hope gentlemen on the other side won't cringe so. I will learn them still more of their candidate, as they are sadly in the dark as to his claims on the gratitude of the American people: and I will now administer to them a dose of Col. POLK's speech against the sub-treasury, to be found in vol. 11, p. 1278-'9 of Congressional Debates.



Mr. HARDIN requested Mr. HUDSON to read for him, who declined, as he could not read loud enough.

Mr. C. J. INGERSOLL volunteered to read for Mr. H. Mr. HARDIN replied good humoredly, I beg to be excused for your kindness, as I do not like to get a man to read for me, whose countenance I, and no one else, can ever understand. (A laugh occurred, in which Mr. I. heartily joined.) Mr. SCHENCK then read for Mr. HARDIN the following extracts:

"Whilst I am up, it may be well to notice some other propositions of amendment, which the House have been notified will be made to this bill, especially as I may not have another opportunity to address the House. A gentleman from Virginia [Mr. GORNON] has signified his intention to move the amendment to this bill which he presented and had printed by order of the House some days ago. That amendment provides that the 'collectors of the public revenue,' when the amounts collected are small, 'shall be the agents of the Treasurer, to keep and disburse the same;' and that they shall receive an annual compensation. It provides, further, that, at places where the amount collected shall be large, 'receivers' shall be appointed, 'to be agents of the Treasurer, to keep and disburse the public moneys,' and that they shall be paid an annual compensation for their services."

"A corporation may be safer than any individual agent, however responsible he may be, because it consists of an association of individuals who have thrown together their aggregated wealth, and who are bound in their corporate character, to the extent of their whole capital stock, for the deposit. In addition to this, the Secretary of the Treasury may require as heavy collateral security, in addition to their capital paid in, from such a corporation, as he could from an individual collector or receiver, which makes the Government deposits safer in the hands of a bank than it could be with an individual."

"As, then, between the responsibility of a public receiver and bank corporations, as banks do exist, and are likely to exist, under State authority, the latter, upon the ground of safety to the public, are to be preferred."

"It may happen in the fluctuation of the amount of revenue and expenditures, that there will be at some times a considerable surplus in the treasury; which, though it may be temporary, if it be withdrawn from circulation, and placed in the strong box of a receiver, the amount of circulation will be injuriously disturbed, by hoarding the deposit, by which the value of every article of merchandise and property would be affected. So that, inasmuch as we cannot anticipate or estimate what the exact amount of revenue or expenditure may be from year to year, there may occur an excess of revenue in the treasury, not immediately called for to be disbursed, which it would be very inconvenient to abstract from trade and circulation. Whilst the deposit is in a bank, the bank may use it, keeping itself at the same time ready to pay when demanded, and it is not withdrawn from the general circulation, as so much money hoarded and withdrawn from the use of the community."

"If in the hands of receivers, they must either hoard it, by keeping it locked up in a strong box, or use it at their own risk in private speculation or trade; or they must, for their own security, and on their own responsibility, place it at last on deposit in banks for safe-keeping, until they are called on by the Government for it."

"This temporary use of the money on deposit in a bank, constitutes the only compensation which the bank receives for the risk of keeping it, and for the services it performs. If receivers be employed, they can perform no other service than to keep the money, and must be paid a compensation from the treasury."

As this seems to be a very unwelcome speech to gentlemen, and makes their countenances look as gloomy as if they were about to lose a new found friend, I will not longer comment upon it, but shall leave it as a task for locofoco orators, to answer the arguments of Col. POLK, when they make their next speech in favor of the sub-treasury.

#### STATE BANKS.

It is interesting to know what are the views of Col. POLK on the subject of the currency. Not satisfied with the opinion of WASHINGTON, and those who made the Constitution, as expressed by their acts in 1791; nor of MADISON and the republican party of 1816; nor of the Supreme Court of the United States, the tribunal of final resort for the determination of such questions; Mr. POLK has declared himself against a National bank, on constitutional grounds. He was suspected of being in favor of the exclusive hard money currency, but when he was canvassing for governor, he came out in a circular in favor of State Banks. As I have not that circular by me, and yet am confident of the fact I assert, and as many of the locos are for the exclusive specie currency, I wish to call the attention of the Democratic members from Tennessee to the statement, that Col. POLK has avowed himself the friend of State banks. (Several of the Democratic members from Tennessee were listening, but none responded.)

I take it, then, as an admitted fact, that Col. POLK is for State banks. According to Col. POLK's plan, we are always to have a paper currency. Now it is for the people to decide, and this issue is presented to them; if we are to have a currency regulated by banks, which does experience, and the wisdom of the past point out, as the safest for the people and the Government; a properly guarded national bank, or unnumbered quantities of State banks, which are chartered and regulated at the whim and caprice of twenty-six independent States.



## INTERNAL IMPROVEMENTS.

In looking over the votes of this new candidate, who is a western man, and who, it is therefore said, has claims on the west for support, I find that he has voted against almost every bill which has been brought forward to sustain western interests.

I will quote a few items, which might be greatly enlarged :

*March 2, 1827.*—On the passage of "An act to grant a quantity of land to the State of Illinois, for the purpose of aiding the opening a canal to connect the waters of the Illinois river with those of lake Michigan," ayes 90, nays 67, J. K. Polk in the negative. (Jour. H. R. 1826, page 375.)

*February 18, 1829.*—On ordering the bill to be engrossed "for the preservation and repair of the Cumberland road," yeas 105, nays 91, J. K. Polk in the negative. (Jour. H. R. 1828-'9, page 305.)

*March 29, 1830.*—Mr. Polk made a speech against internal improvements by the General Government. (Cong. Debates, vol. 6, page 692.)

*May 29, 1830.*—On agreeing to amendment of the Senate to the House bill, which amendment provided for "the improvement of harbors, bays, rivers, and creeks," &c., ayes 85, nays 53, J. K. Polk in the negative. (Jour. H. R. page 795.)

*May 29, 1830.*—On the passage of an act to authorize subscription for stock on the part of the United States to the Louisville and Portland Canal Company, yeas 80, nays 37, J. K. Polk in the negative. (Jour. H. R. 803.)

Were I at any loss to know the reasons of Col. Polk's opposition to these measures from his speeches, I could find them in the new principles of your party, which cause a large majority of them to vote against all appropriations for the improvement of rivers and harbors. This corresponds with Col. Polk's present views, and the commentary upon the precept is, his votes against every western improvement by the General Government. Don't smile, gentlemen, and say, that is just what we contend for; for I am under the disagreeable necessity of advising you that Colonel Polk, when first a candidate for Congress, wrote a circular in which he advocated the propriety and constitutionality of a system of internal improvement by the General Government, and told the people that, from the way one of the projected roads ought to run, it would most probably run through his district. And if he has changed his opinion on this subject once, why may he not change back again? I have not a copy of the circular here, but I am so fully informed of it by gentlemen who well know Col. Polk's opinions, that I have no doubt it will shortly be republished, to add one more to that glorious galaxy of inconsistencies which, when blazing in richest profusion, seems to constitute *the milky way* that leads inevitably to locofoco promotion.

## OREGON.

I shall read now another of the resolutions of this Polk Convention :

"*Resolved*, That our title to the whole of the territory of Oregon is clear and unquestionable; that no portion of the same ought to be ceded to England or any other power; and that the re-occupation of Oregon and the reannexation of Texas at the earliest practicable period are great American measures, which this Convention recommends to the cordial support of the Democracy of the Union."

And so it seems Oregon is to be pressed into the service, and its re-occupation is to be made a party hobby for locofocoism to ride. The United States is not big enough, and has got rather too hot to hold the mighty leaders of locofocoism; and so they must add Oregon and Texas, to give them breathing and dodging space, and room to display their grandiloquent powers. But, sir, if gentlemen will only hold still, I intend to tap them for this Oregon inflation, and will relieve them of some of this surplus Rocky mountain wind, before it gets troublesome on their stomachs. Permit me first to ask, if this is so important an American question, why is it that the bill and resolution on this subject have been permitted to sleep in quiet on the table of this House for six months past, when you have so large a majority here? I will press this question further presently. But I suppose now, since the Baltimore Convention have added these new articles to the political creed of locofocoism, you are all first-rate, dyed-in-the-wool Oregon men. Is your candidate an Oregon man? And has he always been so? Don't look astonished, gentlemen, although you should find I already know more about your four-days-old candidate than you do yourselves. Do you not know that in December, 1828, there was a bill before this House extending the jurisdiction of the laws of the United States over *all the people* in Oregon Territory, and directing the officers of Government to take possession of the mouth of the Columbia river, and establish a fort there, being just such a bill as is now before this House? And do you not know that on the 29th day of that month, this same James K. Polk delivered a lengthy speech *against that bill*? I have not the time to detain the committee by refreshing these new Oregon converts with the reading of that speech; but I will advise any member who desires to make a speech against the Oregon bill now pending in this house to take up this speech and read it, and it will suit his case precisely. It will be found in vol. 5, pages 129 to 132, Congressional Debates. Mr. Polk states that he considers our title to Oregon better than that of Great Britain, a point about which there is no difference of opinion among Whigs or Locos. He then sets out our treaty stipulations with Great Britain, which still exist, the same now as then, by which the country was to be occupied jointly by the citizens of both powers until one year's notice was given of an intention to abrogate the convention; that no such notice had been given; and then argues against the legality and propriety



of passing the bill. I will now read a few sentences, that gentlemen may see the purport of the speech

"These are the stipulations of the existing treaties between this Government and that of Great Britain. Whilst they continue in force, they are declared by the Constitution to be the supreme law of the land. Now we have not given the notice of twelve months to annul or abrogate them, and unless we do, or receive such notice from them, they are in full force, and are obligatory upon us."

"Such of our adventurous citizens as are disposed to penetrate into the unexplored wilds west of the Rocky mountains, have the right to do so. Great Britain has not, as yet, established any military posts, and has avowed her intention not to do so until we do. Her hunting companies may have private defences and temporary fortifications."

"With these facts before us, contained in the official documents on our tables, who can doubt, if we send a military force there, during the continuance in force of these treaties, but that Great Britain will send one also? and if so, collisions between the armed forces of the two countries might, and probably would, be the consequence, and we might thus be compelled to decide by arms that which would be much better settled by negotiation."

"We ought, he said, to pause before we passed this bill; not that he would for a moment think of abandoning our title, (for he believed it to be the better one,) or of permitting any foreign power to become the owner of the country. We should not act now; but, as the question of title is left to future adjustment by negotiation, until we ascertained that there is no hope of regulating it by the Executive, let us postpone any measure on the subject. In the mean time, he would not permit Great Britain or any other power to take exclusive possession of it. By delay we can lose nothing. By acting now, we may hazard much. If the question of title was settled, and we were the undisputed owners of the country, *many would even then doubt* whether it would be our policy to extend our population to this distant region. We had yet, on this side of the Rocky mountains, a vast extent of wild unsettled territory, which will probably remain so for half a century to come. But it was not now necessary to decide that question. At all events, he considered it premature now to do so, when we must do it at a vast cost, and at the hazard of being involved in war. Let our citizens who chose, at least for the present, go there and hunt, fish, or traffic at their option. *Let the country, at least for the present, remain a waste;* it will be time enough to settle it, if we should *ever* deem it our policy to do so, when the present difficulties are removed, when the dispute as to title shall be settled, and when we shall have acquired more accurate information in relation to it."

Subsequently, during the same session, Mr. Polk offered a resolution having for its object the extension of the jurisdiction of our courts "*over all the citizens of the United States*" who may be in the territory of Oregon, (which of course did not include British subjects who might be there,) and also for an exploration of the territory. (Cong. Deb., vol. 5, page 143.) There is no person of any party who would object to this proposition of Col. Polk. But, sir, I go farther than he does. I am also for giving the requisite notice to Great Britain; and as soon as we can do so without any breach of faith, I wish to see Oregon taken possession of by our Government. I have entertained these views, not as a party man, but as a western man, who wishes to see that country, which all Americans agree rightfully belongs to us, brought under subjection to our laws, and left free to the occupation of our citizens. In these views I have differed from many of my political friends, who doubt the present policy of the proposed measure; and recently, since I have examined Col. Polk's speeches, I find him occupying the very same grounds and urging the very same reasons which are occupied and urged by those friends who differ from me. And now, after this exposition of the views of your candidate, which he has never withdrawn, I ask you *locos* if you do not feel ashamed of your Oregon thunder? I really commiserate your unenviable condition, and if you only feel half as bad as you look, you must be suffering the last agonies of despair.

#### TEXAS.

But, sir, you also say in your Polk resolutions that you are for the *re-annexation* of Texas. This, I suppose, includes, according to Texas law and Texas boundary, the *re-annexation* of large portions of three Mexican provinces, and some twenty or thirty Mexican towns, including Santa Fé. Your new ideas of *re-annexation* are doubtless enlarging with your new issues. I do not design entering into the discussion of the Texas question at length. An hour would be a very short time to do so, much less the few minutes I have to bestow on it. But I intend to talk to you *locos* about this new issue, as we say in the West, "just like a brother." At the recent Baltimore Convention you have consigned to political infamy your old leader, Martin Van Buren. As you had falsely alleged that he was unfairly defeated in 1840, and that he ought to have *justice* done him in 1844, we were anxious you should afford us an opportunity of giving him *ample justice*, by giving him and his party another sound political drubbing next fall. But, sir, you have prevented us from bestowing upon him this "labor of love." You have strangled him with your own hands, in your own camp. In the complimentary resolution which you passed over his political *manes*, you say he fell a martyr to his principles in 1840, and you should justly have added, he was foully *re-murdered* in 1844 by his own friends, on account of the unpopularity of his principles.

You are endeavoring to produce the impression now, that Mr. Van Buren was sacrificed on account of his Texas opinions. Sir, this is not so; but if it were, the only cause of regret for his fate would be,



that he was consigned to oblivion by his party friends, for the most honorable and statesmanlike act of his life. The misfortune may be his—the disgrace is his friends. But, sir, you and I well know, that it was publicly proclaimed in this city months ago, that if you lost the Connecticut and Virginia elections, you would withdraw Mr. Van Buren and run some other candidate. After the result of the elections in Maryland and Connecticut, and the special elections in Pennsylvania were known, you became very restless, and began to look around for new issues. Believing that Mr. Van Buren would go with you for the annexation of Texas, those members of your party who resided in doubtful States, especially in the South, began to come out for it. The returns of the Virginia election brought the news of your disastrous defeat in that time-honored Commonwealth, at the same time that Mr. Van Buren's letter against annexation was published. This was adding disappointment to defeat. It was too much for your philosophy—and, like the little boy who got mad at his wooden hobby-horse because it would not jump a branch with him, and who, in his childish anger, got down and broke it to pieces—so your party vexed, disappointed, and maddened at your multiplied defeats, caused not by the acts of Mr. Van Buren, but by the unpopularity of your and his principles, vented their spleen upon your leader, and offered him up a *holocaust* to the chagrin and dissensions of those leaders of your party, who were thirsting for the retreating spoils of office.

I now understand your party are for the annexation of Texas, and that this is designed to be made an issue in the ensuing canvass. Pray tell me, sir, when this became so important an *American question*? Is it now any thing more of “an American question” than it was in 1838, when its reannexation was promptly rejected by President Van Buren and John Forsyth; which act your whole party sustained without a dissenting voice? Was it made a question in the election of any man here? Was it agitated at all before the people when the members of this House were elected? Was it ever mentioned as a great question during the first four months of this session? Was it ever dreamed of as a great political issue until the noise of defeat began to reverberate upon your ears from the first battle ground of the revolution? No, sir, no man imagined such a thing, unless it was John Jones and Captain Tyler.

This scheme of begging Texas to be *re-annexed* to the United States immediately, was the device and invention of Captain Tyler. There is no doubt but that he considered it a fine hobby to ride into a re-election. If then, any body is entitled to the benefit of the suggestion, it is the Captain. It is his peculiar thunder. And now what are you Locos doing? You have mounted upon this hobby, *behind* the Captain, and are already meanly striving to push him off and put up James K. Polk in his place. Sir, if I had you before an impartial jury, (and we will have you on trial next November before the grand inquest of the nation,) I could convict you of *petty larceny* in stealing away the Captain's hobby-horse.

Sir, your design in this, is palpable. Aye, sir, it is for the purpose of drawing off and misleading the public mind from the old issues, on which it is apparent you would be defeated; and with the hope of inoculating the South with the Texas, and the West with the Oregon fever, that you hope again to craze the brain of the people, and induce them, in the paroxysm of the disease, to deliver into your hands the reins of Government.

What right has your party to say that they are the peculiar advocates of this or any other subject, as an American question? And what reason have the people to believe you would even carry out annexation if you had the power? Can we see it in your acts? To leave out of view the old promises of your party—what have you done with your overwhelming majority here, about this Oregon Bill? How have you kept your promises to repeal the black tariff of 1842? And where is your sub-Treasury bill, which you were to re-enact, to undo all the Whig Congress had done, as you boastfully alleged you would do at the commencement of this session? Sir, they all sleep in quiet repose on the table of this House, waiting the action of the Locofoco majority. Perhaps this retort may galvanize some of them into *re-existence*. Sir, the conduct of your party leaders on this, as on various other occasions, proves that you have no sincerity, and are not to be trusted with power. Place the power of Government again under your control, and Texas may remain independent—be annexed to the United States, or be *re-annexed* to Mexico, as may seem most advisable, to enable you to hold on to the spoils of office. The history of your legislation still exhibits the verification of the remark of that great Southern chief of your party, that “you are held together by the cohesive power of the public plunder.” And now, you are willing to plunder Mexico or Texas, if you can thereby regain the longed for *spoils of office*.

But your resolution says you are for annexation “*at the earliest practicable period*.” Was that intended to have one meaning for the North, and another for the South? The gentleman from Alabama is very particular upon this matter of two faces for two sections of the country. I call his attention to this point. Does this resolution mean, that your party and your candidate are in favor of *the present treaty*? That is the question of annexation which is presented to the American people. I want no equivocating or shuffling on this point, but a direct answer from the gentleman who has laid so much stress upon this subject of annexation in his remarks. I appeal to the gentleman from Alabama to say whether the Democratic party, or himself, or Mr. Polk, are for the ratification of this treaty?

“Mr. PAYNE explained his meaning when he had spoken of the gentleman's presenting two faces. Mr. Clay had published a letter, and, with apparent skill and design, had avoided to answer the question. From a cursory glance of it, any one might suppose he was in favor of annexation.”

Mr. HARDIN. I ask that gentleman if himself, or the Democratic party, or James K. Polk, *were for this treaty*; and not with reference to Mr. Clay's views. These were clearly expressed in his letter.

“Mr. PAYNE said he (Mr. Clay) had never come up to the question—he stated nowhere whether he was in favor of annexation. Mr. P. here took his seat.”

Mr. HARDIN resumed. Now is not this beautiful? Is it not exactly after the model of the Van Buren school? I asked a gentleman who has just made a Polk and Texas speech, if he, or his party, or his



candidate, mean, by the resolution passed at Baltimore, that they are for the Texas treaty. He twice evades any answer to my question, and says he is opposed to Mr. Clay, and that he don't understand his views on the subject of Texas. The gentleman could not have given a better epitome of the principles of his party, than this single circumstance. They have no definite practical principles for the public eye, but deal in double meaning generalities, and condense the whole catalogue of their principles in that one sentence, "*we are opposed to Henry Clay.*"

The attempt is vain to get an answer from any of these gentlemen to these inquiries. As to Mr. Clay's opinion on annexation, it is needless for me to explain. They are written so boldly, and plainly, and frankly in his letter on that subject, that a man cannot misapprehend though he may misrepresent them.

The locofoco party are seeking to make a new issue, and now we have a right to know the exact terms of that issue. If you endorse this treaty, with the correspondence which brought it into being, say so. If you are against it, and for immediate annexation in any other way, or upon any other terms, proclaim them distinctly. Are you determined to have Texas, even if you have to go to war with Mexico to obtain it? Let the country distinctly understand your intentions. We want no more Missouri questions to threaten the dissolution of the Union. And let it not be said by your partizans in the South, that you are for annexation for the purpose of extending the limits and increasing the influence of the slave States; and yet in the north, the friends of annexation stating, as did the gentleman from Pennsylvania, (Mr. C. J. INGERSOLL,) in his recent letter to the *Globe*, "that Texas would make one slave and three free States, and would thus greatly increase the preponderance of the free States." Here is evidence of further equivocation and shuffling by your party leaders on this "new issue." You are "blowing hot to the south, and cold to the north, in the same breath," on this subject. When evidence of your unfairness and hypocrisy is so apparent, do you suppose you can deceive the American people? And let me tell you southern Texas advocates, that if, by any chance, the professing locofoco friends of annexation should ever get the majority in Congress, you will find your northern loco allies deserting you on the details of the measure, as they did on the tariff question, and you will curse them in your hearts with tenfold the bitterness you do the Whigs.

I admit that in some portions of the Union you intend to make a desperate fight. The minority of your party at the south, have overruled the majority of your party at the north, and compelled them to adopt a southern candidate, and to pack what you term a southern question. The northern democracy will scarcely make a struggle. The battle is expected to be fought upon Texas at the South, upon Oregon in the West, and upon Dallas in Pennsylvania. You misjudge the gullibility of the American people, if you suppose they are to be misled or deceived by these "*tubs thrown out to catch whales.*" I have already tapped your Oregon tub, and let water enough into it to sink it. The people of Pennsylvania have too much practical sense to be induced to support Dallas, when he is playing second fiddle to the free trade anti-tariff tunes of Col. Polk. And I much mistake the intelligence and devotion to the fundamental principles of our Government, which characterize southern Whigs, if you are able to deceive them into your support by the *ignis fatuus* glare of this Texas issue. Too long have they contended for honest principles against the wily arts of locofocoism, until they have been purified as by fire. They have won the laurels they so honorably wear, in too many hard fought fields, to permit them to be torn from their brows by a stratagem of their enemies.. And if I may judge of their constituents by the noble band of firm and talented representatives which the southern Whigs have on this floor, they are neither to be bought by bribes, deceived by hypocritical pretences, nor driven by bravado threats, from the defence of those principles they have long cherished; nor from the support of that man who has shown himself the true advocate of all sections of our country, and who, in every dangerous emergency, has risen with renewed energy above all party trammels, and towering aloft above all competitors, has grappled and mastered every difficulty, and exhibited before an admiring world the enlightened principles of a true American statesman.

#### AVAILABILITY.

The recent Baltimore Convention rejected all their most prominent men, and nominated Col. Polk. Why did they do this? Had any public meeting nominated him, was any State or county for him, or did any body ever think of him as a candidate for the presidency? No sir. Why, then, was he nominated? You answer, not because he was our choice, but because he was the most *available* candidate. Do you suppose, sir, that the people have forgotten the pitiable complaints which were made by your party about availability, when the Whigs nominated General Harrison in 1840? Then, you all were of the opinion that Mr. Clay was the man who should have been nominated, as he was most thoroughly identified with our principles. But now, sir, in the face of all your hypocritical pretences on that occasion, you have brought forward a man who was never thought of for that office, because he is considered an *available* candidate.

What is it that makes Mr. Polk available? Is it because he was for a while for Judge White for President, and then afterwards went over to the support of Mr. Van Buren for that office? Or is it because of his recent repeated defeats at home for governor, that he has become available?

But sir, I am not done with this question of *availability*, and I request particularly the attention of the honorable gentleman from Alabama. In January last a warm controversy was carried on in the



columns of "the Globe," between a friend of Colonel POLK, who signed himself a "Tennessee Democrat," and a friend of Colonel KING; and two articles were published in that paper in favor of the claims of each of these gentlemen for the nomination of Vice President. At that time Mr. VAN BUREN was considered as the nominee of the party, as is asserted and admitted in these articles, although the writers *have since* turned against him, and succeeded in defeating his nomination. But at that time, no man of the party thought of supplanting Mr. VAN BUREN with Colonel POLK, any more than that he could break *the wand of a magician with a polk-stalk.*

I will read a few extracts from the first communication in the Globe of January 8, 1844, which contrasted the claims of Colonel KING with those of Colonel POLK.

"7. Finally, the political condition of their respective States is another point of preference for Mr. KING. Alabama is Democratic—Tennessee is Federal Whig. One is helping, the other is injuring, the Democratic cause. The red hot shot of Tennessee are now fired into the Democratic ship. This may be a misfortune, and not the fault of that former Democratic State, and her present public men. Still it is a misfortune which entails a consequence, and which involves a serious consideration in the selection of a Vice Presidential candidate."

"In such a contest the Democracy has no compliments to spare to unfortunate States by carrying the burden of the public men who cannot bring their own State into the Democratic line. *They want strength, not weakness.*"

Now, sir, I ask the gentleman from Alabama, did he not write that paragraph?

Mr. PAYNE said no man was to infer any thing, the one way or the other, from his silence.

Mr. HARDIN. If the gentleman says it is not true, I will take it back.

Mr. PAYNE. I do not know whether I wrote it or not. [Laughter.]

Mr. HARDIN resumed. I will read another article relative to the claims to the Vice Presidency of JAMES K. POLK, and the gentleman may have his choice of the two, as to which he has written.

But this I will say, that, unless the gentleman from Alabama denies that he wrote the article from which I am about to read, I shall take it as admitted that he did. The authorship of the article was no secret when it was written, and as I came by my information in an honorable way, I feel authorized to attribute the authorship to that gentleman.

Mr. PAYNE again protested against any inference with regard to what he might or might not have written, because he refused to answer. He was not bound to answer questions. He chose not to answer; and no man had a right to infer from it that he was the author of the communication.

Mr. HARDIN resumed. The gentleman does not deny he wrote this article in my hand, in the Globe of January 19, written in response to a "Tennessee Democrat;" and, although his modesty forbids his avowal of its paternity, I feel in duty bound to attribute it to him. But the House, by this time, must wish to hear this communication, and, for the peculiar gratification of my amiable loco friends, I will read them some extracts, to show what was thought of Mr. POLK's *availability* in January last.

"But why attack Colonel KING? Why advert to his earliest legislative history? Does he feel that the political capital of Governor POLK is quite too limited to secure a nomination from the Republican party, unless he can pull down the fame of others whose shadow has fallen across the path of his *posthumous bantling* for the Vice Presidency? If so, let me warn 'A Tennessee Democrat' that his disparagement of Colonel KING will add nothing to the political capital of Governor POLK."

"But if he will convince me that there is a well-founded suspicion—a reasonable doubt—of the personal courage of Colonel KING, I pronounce him, without hesitation or qualification, totally unfit for the office of Vice President of the United States. I care not how honorable a man may be, if he is a coward he *cannot maintain* his honor; and hence it is, *such* a man is disqualified for the office of Vice President."

"Now, sir, Colonel KING has never been insulted, day after day; and, above all, he was never caught roughly by the arm, when escaping from the Capitol, pulled round and told that he was the '*contemptible tool* of a petty tyrant!' I pledge my head, if he is ever so treated, he will resent the insult in the proper way. Will 'A Tennessee Democrat' do the same in regard to Governor POLK?"

Do not understand me, Mr. Chairman, as endorsing this charge, or claiming that Colonel POLK's conduct at all disqualified him for office. I only read it to show that Colonel POLK's conduct on the occasion alluded to, in not resenting the insult offered to him, in the opinion of a good Democrat, was not a very high qualification for Vice President. Whether the statement is true, or what were the peculiar circumstances attending this transaction, I do not know. But, if any gentleman desires to obtain further information on the subject, I will refer them to the gentleman from Alabama, who can doubtless give the desired information.

I will proceed to give you some more extracts, in broken doses, as it would not be right to administer such a prescription in a single dose.

"What are the facts in regard to Governor POLK? He has been twice *repudiated* in his own State by large majorities—defeated by an inexperienced politician; and it is not pretended that his name would



'add one *particle* of strength to the ticket in any State of this Union. Why, then, talk of *his* selection as the candidate of the party ?'

"Again, we are told, 'If, on the contrary, you do not run Governor POLK, you may lose Tennessee.' Will the selection of Governor POLK prevent that result ? He has been run twice for Governor of that State lately, and has been defeated both times most signally. This would seem to be *conclusive* that Tennessee *cannot be carried* by the Democracy if Governor POLK is upon the ticket. If this be a legitimate conclusion, it is due to the principles we profess, not to jeopard their success by *rain attempts to force upon the people of Tennessee* a man whom they have twice refused to honor, notwithstanding the supposed 'deep, bold, and lasting impress left by Governor POLK on our public affairs.'"

This, sir, is all "as true as preaching." And if it was true in January, is it not true now ? The people of Tennessee, after trying Colonel POLK as a member of Congress, and two years as Governor, repudiated him twice successively, in 1841 and 1843, and decided he was not fit to be a Tennessee Governor. The writer of this article thought, if he was so badly broken down that he was not fit for Governor of Tennessee, he could not be available as a candidate for Vice President. And now I want to know, if he was not fit for Governor of Tennessee in 1843, nor for Vice President last January, by what system of legerdemain is it, that he has suddenly become so *available* for President of this great republic ?

But here it comes again. And let those gentlemen, who are so pleased with their *available* candidate, listen :

"The truth is, it will not do. Governor Polk has no greater claims upon the people of this Union than any other man of equal ability who has faithfully maintained the principles of his party. There are now at least one hundred men in the Union who have served their party as long, as ably, and as faithfully as Governor Polk ; whose claims are fully equal in every respect to his, but whose names have never been mentioned in connexion with the Vice Presidency, and possibly never will be.

"I therefore respectfully suggest to a 'Tennessee Democrat' to *abandon that system of puffing, blowing, and swelling, by which a toad may be magnified into the dimensions of an ox* ; or, if he still wishes to persevere, let him do so upon the merits of his own *subject*, and not upon the demerits of others."

"Is not this a handsome *commentary* on the *text* of *availability* ? And would not this article look well in capitals, under a ticket headed with the "*posthumous bantling*" of a Tennessee Democrat. And yet, sir, the honorable gentleman from Alabama endorses the nominations, and pretends they will elect Col. Polk by a triumphant majority. It reminds me of a remark I heard made by a distinguished Democrat who had known Col. Polk long : "That it never did occur to him they would have to manufacture a candidate, and that without the aid of a tariff too, out of such small materials."

Since the nomination, a number of locos have remarked to me that I could not make a picture to injure Col. Polk. I will spare gentlemen that infliction. But it is not because there is not a subject for it. What would be more graphic than to see "A Tennessee Democrat" busily engaged, with a pipe stem in his mouth, blowing up a toad, swelled and distended almost to bursting with a likeness of the "*posthumous bantling*" for a head-piece ; and the writer of this communication intently looking on, with his thumb upon his nose and his digitals extended, exclaiming : "*I respectfully suggest to a Tennessee Democrat to abandon that system of puffing, blowing, and swelling, by which a toad may be magnified into the dimensions of an ox.*" Would not that make a picture ?

Since I have lifted the veil which concealed so many of the hidden beauties of your candidate, I hope gentlemen are satisfied with his *availability*. He has been for the Sub-Treasury, and against it ; for the Deposit Bank system, and against it ; for Internal Improvements by the General Government, and against them. Is against an exclusive metallic currency and a National Bank, and for State Banks. Is for the annexation of Texas ; but whether he is for or against the present treaty, none of his friends will tell. He was against the occupation of Oregon, and now possibly may be for it. And he is for a horizontal twenty per cent. tariff, and against discriminating in any way so as to afford even incidental protection to American labor. Such is your candidate. Governor Jones used to tell him on the stump in the canvass, that he could prove him to have been on both sides of every important political question which had been before the public since he had entered political life. And yet he is selected, it is said, because he was *available*.

#### "PRINCIPLES NOT MEN."

With all these facts staring us in the face in the history of your candidates, we yet hear it said, that the reason Mr. Van Buren was laid aside, and Mr. Polk taken up, was because your party goes for "*principles not men.*" As this is one of the mottoes of modern Democracy, I propose briefly to examine your claims to it. Many of the resolutions passed at the recent Baltimore convention, which are set forth as the articles of your creed, consist of such vague generalities, that nine-tenths of all parties will agree to them ; and each member of your party is thus left at liberty to give them such a construction as will suit his latitude. The first resolution declares your opposition to "*factitious symbols* ;" and yet, in the recent contest, in Tennessee, your party adopted Polk stalks and Polk bushes as their symbols, as they formerly did hickory sticks and hickory bushes in the palmy days of Jacksonism. They next resolve themselves in favor of a strict construction of the Constitution ; yet your party in Congress never had any difficulty in finding the Constitution broad enough to permit you to do any thing you desired, from the annexation of a nation, down to the expunging of the journals of Congress. They next declare



“that the Constitution does not confer upon Congress the power to commence and carry on a general system of Internal Improvements.” I might refer, in explanation of this resolution, to the votes of a large number of your party in this and preceding Congresses, in favor of these improvements. But as you go for “principles not men” I will give you a commentary, in the political course of your candidate for Vice President, Mr. G. M. Dallas. On the 25th of May, 1832, he voted, in the Senate, for a bill to subscribe, on the part of the General Government, for stock in the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. And on the 2d day of June, 1832, he voted for a bill making large appropriations for Internal Improvements by the General Government.

The resolutions in relation to the tariff, slavery, and economy in the administration of the Government are so vague and uncertain, that they mean any thing, or nothing, as each interpreter may desire.

They next remarked “that Congress has no power to charter a National Bank.” I will give you another commentary on this by referring to Mr. Dallas. On 9th January, 1832, Mr. Dallas presented a memorial to the Senate from the United States Bank praying its recharter, and accompanied it with these remarks :

“He could not but feel strongly impressed by the recollection that the Legislature of Pennsylvania recently and in effect unanimously had recommended the recharter of the Bank. He came there *A WILLING* as he was virtually an *instructed AGENT* in promoting, to the extent of his ability, an object, which however dangerously timed its introduction might seem, *was in itself entitled to every consideration and favor.*” (See Register of Debates, vol. viii, Part I., p. 55.)

“*March 13, 1832.*—Mr. DALLAS, from the Select Committee, reported a bill to renew the charter of the Bank of the United States ”

“*May 23, 1832.*—Mr. DALLAS made a speech in favor of the Bank, as constitutional and expedient.”

Mr. Dallas voted for the bill to recharter the U. S. Bank, and when it was vetoed by President Jackson, he voted for its recharter notwithstanding the veto. Subsequently, Mr. Dallas turned against the old U. S. Bank, but he did not change his opinions about the constitutionality or expediency of such an institution, as is apparent from the following extract from a letter of his, addressed to some of the citizens of his own State, dated July 7, 1836.

“Of the Constitutional power of the National Government to create *A BANK*, I did not then, nor do I now *entertain a doubt.* Of the ability of Congress to create *such a Bank* as would be a safe machine of finance, and a serviceable agent in preserving a sound currency, *I then was, as I still am, CONVINCED.*”

Another resolution is—

“8. That the separation of the moneys of the Government from banking institutions, is indispensable for the safety of the funds of the Government, and the rights of the people.”

A fine commentary on this, will be found in Col. Polk’s speeches against the sub-Treasury, and in favor of the Deposit Bank system. And also in the entire omission of acting on the sub-Treasury bill, which has remained on the table of this House for months past.

They next declare themselves opposed to materially altering our naturalization laws. So am I, and so are the great mass of the Whig party.

They also denounce the distribution of the proceeds of public lands, “*as inexpedient in policy, and repugnant to the Constitution.*” Mr. Dallas was in the Senate when Mr. Clay introduced his bill to distribute the proceeds of the public lands amongst the States, and he voted with Mr. Clay, and against the opponents of that measure, on every important amendment which was offered to it. The bill finally passed July 3, 1832, Mr. Dallas voting for it.

I now submit it to any candid Democrat, if this review of your resolutions is not a beautiful commentary on your motto of “principles not men.” On the great constitutional questions of the bank, distribution, and internal improvements, your candidate for Vice President is directly in opposition to your resolutions. Your party have always boasted that “obedience to instructions” was one of its cardinal doctrines—yet, when from two-thirds to three-fourths of your Convention were directly instructed to nominate Mr. Van Buren, they disregarded their instructions, and selected a man never thought of for the office by any of those who appointed them. You proclaim as a fundamental principle, that “the majority should always rule”—yet in your Convention you trampled this principle under foot, and adopted a two-thirds rule, by which a minority of the convention actually defeated the nomination of a man who received a majority of all the votes of the Convention.

Why, sir, if any man will examine, he will find that the principles of your party leaders vary according to their latitudes, and sometimes according to States. In Pennsylvania and the North, they are for a protective tariff. In the South, they are for free trade and State banks. And in the West, they are anti-tariff, and for the exclusive hard money currency. It was correctly said by a leading Loco editor of Ohio, that “the principles of Democracy are progressive.” That which was Democracy a few years ago, is denounced as Federalism now; and the Democrat who has remained steadfast in the principles he entertained twelve years since, will find himself in the Whig ranks now. The truth is, modern Democracy has changed all its doctrines, until there are none of its original principles left. It reminds me of Domine Thompson’s black silk stockings. The Domine prided himself very much on his silk stockings, and his careful housekeeper, as the stockings wore out, not having the silk, darned them with white, mixed, or black wool, as she had either most convenient at hand. In time, as the silk disap-



peared, its place was supplied with these parti-colored patches of wool, until there was not a particle of the original silk left. Yet the Domine was as proud of them as ever, and on Sunday mornings when he wished to dress very fine, would always ask for his "*black silk stockings*." So it has been with "Democratic principles." From year to year, you have discarded some old, and patched the place with some new parti-colored principle, to suit the views of party leaders, or the changes of popular sentiment, until now, not a vestige of what was old fashioned Democracy is found to remain.

Mr. Chairman, in the free examination I have made into the political course of Col. Polk, I have not sought to detract from his ability; nor have I ventured within the precincts of his private life, to blacken his character, and prejudice him in the minds of the American people. I would scorn to do so. I leave such work to Amos Kendall and other political scavengers, be they on this floor or elsewhere, who, feeling themselves destitute of the ability to meet the great political issues now before the public, gratify the paltry malice of ignoble minds, by attacking the private character of that great American statesman who is our candidate for the presidency. Sir, the country is too well acquainted with the character and services of Henry Clay to feel anything but disgust, and to treat with anything but contempt, the newly created forgeries, and the old exploded falsehoods, which have been revamped to suit the present emergency of the party. His eminent services, during the last war; at the treaty of Ghent; in the settlement of the Missouri and nullification questions; and during a long course of public life; have endeared him to the hearts and confidence of the American people; and now that the mists of prejudice have been driven away by the voice of truth, the admiring world beholds his name inscribed so high on the mount of fame, that none who seek to tarnish his reputation can reach the lowest letter which glitters in the inscription of his renown.

Nor have I, Mr. Chairman, attempted to defend or explain the principles of my party. They need no exposition, and can be seen and known of all men. They could not be better known, were they written in letters of fire on the columns of your Capitol, and elevated, until they could be read at the farthest confines of the Republic. Based upon the immutable laws of truth, and of republican liberty, they will exist as landmarks for all practical statesmen, until the chain of this Union shall be severed by anarchy, or dissolved amidst the ruins of time. Contending for such principles, and with such a leader, the Whigs fear not defeat, but look forward to certain and glorious triumph. Sir, in firmly maintaining and cementing the Union of these States, in devotion to the Constitution, and to the noble principles of our Government, we yield to none. The Whigs in the North, the South, the East, and the West are actuated by the purest and noblest purposes; and let danger lower over our horizon, coming from what quarter of the earth it may, in the shape of open war from abroad, or intestine dissention from within; firmly trusting and believing that our country will continue to be in the right, as she always has been heretofore; the motto of the Whigs will float aloft on their banners—OUR COUNTRY FIRST—OUR COUNTRY LAST—AND BY THAT COUNTRY, IN EVERY CONTEST, WE WILL STAND FOREVER.

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*Extract from Mr. Hardin's speech, delivered in the House of Representatives  
21st March, 1844.*

SONGS, BANNERS, &c.—Although I am aware that the bare mention of Songs and Banners will affect some gentlemen like the showing of water to a mad dog, and may cause them to rave somewhat out of time and tune, I must invite their attention to this subject. Permit me here to remark, that although the Whigs do use Songs and Banners, they do not pretend that such things can change votes. They have too high a regard for the sense and intelligence of voters to believe so. But when a man has read or listened until he has become convinced, it is as natural for him to sing a song, or make a banner expressive of his feelings, as it is for a man with a clear conscience, to have his face lit up with a smile, or as it is natural and appropriate in a handsome woman, to decorate herself with becoming apparel.

But it is not to Whig, but Locofoco Songs and Banners that I desire to invite attention. Do gentlemen suppose the people have forgotten the hickory poles, hickory brooms, and hickory bushes, which they formerly paraded on all occasions, and the pictures of a hog with which they headed their tickets, to influence their party to "go the whole hog" in elections? And even now, whenever one of their party is suspected of disaffection, do you not see him fasten himself on to a hickory stick, and *tote* it about as an emblem of his faithfulness? Why, sir, in 1840, those men who stand highest in the party of these fault finding gentry, resorted to the very same things which they now condemn. In Tennessee, they had their hickory bushes and *polk stalks*. During the canvass, and shortly preceding the election in 1840, Gen. Jackson was invited to a political meeting in Jackson, Tennessee, where he attended and made an address. Several thousand persons were present. A public dinner was also given. Well, sir, at this dinner, *a large ash-cake was baked, containing about three bushels of corn meal. This was put on the table, and a hickory bush stuck in the centre of it, and three plates put on the ash-cake, and out of these plates ate Gen. JACKSON, FELIX GRUNDY, and JAMES K. POLK.*

Should this be questioned, I am authorized to refer to honorable gentlemen from Tennessee for its accuracy. These squeamish gentlemen must not understand me as finding fault with this arrangement. Whether a man prefers to eat off a table or an ash-cake, is altogether *a matter of taste*, and I am willing



every man should consult his own. Yet, when any of these gentlemen again find fault with Whigners and Whig *ash-poles* I do hope they will remember the Tennessee *polk-stalks*, and this *Jacks cake*, with the hickory bush stuck in it.

These gentlemen also seem to have forgotten the songs they used to sing in the halcyon days of Unionism. This is one of the secrets of their downfall. People that can't sing and rejoice, are already on the downward road to defeat. I have one of these old Jackson songs now before me, beginning "son's acoming, oho, oho," which I used to hear the girls sing to the tune of "the Campbell coming"—and a downright good song it is. But now, since the ladies, nearly to a man, have turned to be Clay-men, it is not surprising that those persons, who are so intent after "the loaves and fishes," should feel a holy horror at hearing a Whig song. These men who are hankering after the "sacred office," had just as well prepare themselves for "one of the tallest falls" they ever got in the North, for we have the songs written, the music set, and pretty girls enough on our side to sing the hymns out of Locofocoism.

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